

What is Claimed is:

1. A method of presenting a commercial message with a desired digital signal comprising:
 - a) combining the commercial message with the desired digital signal into a combined data stream;
 - b) transmitting the combined data stream over a wireless network;
 - c) receiving the combined data stream from the wireless network;
 - d) decoding the combined data stream into the commercial message and the desired digital signal; and
 - e) presenting the desired digital signal and the commercial message to an end user according to the capabilities of an appliance used by the end user to perceive the digital signal.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the wireless network is a local area network.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of transmitting the combined data stream over a wide area network before transmitting the combined data stream over the wireless local area network.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the wide area network is the Internet.
5. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of receiving the combined data stream from the wireless network and the step of decoding the combined signal are both accomplished by the appliance.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of receiving the combined data stream from the wireless network and the step of decoding the combined signal are both accomplished by an adapter physically connected to the appliance.
7. The method of claim 2, wherein the presenting of the commercial message is accomplished via the appliance.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the presenting of the commercial message is accomplished using a technique chosen from the following set: a visual presentation in a pop-up window presented in a display screen of the appliance; a visual presentation in an area comprising less than all of the display screen, with such area being dedicated to the presentation of the commercial message; a visual presentation in all of the display screen that temporarily interrupts the presenting of the desired digital signal; an audio message; or a translucent image on the display screen that allows some of the content of the desired digital signal to be seen through the translucent image.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the technique used to present the commercial message is determined by the content of the commercial message.

10. The method of claim 3, wherein the commercial message is buried in the combined data stream, such that the commercial message is not easily detected in the combined data stream.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the combined data stream is a functional replacement to the desired digital signal, such that a second user expecting only the desired digital signal could received the combined data stream without effecting the ability of the second user to use the combined data stream as if it were the desired digital signal.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the combined data stream is transmitted over the wide area network in the preferred format of the desired digital signal.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the desired digital signal is an audio/video signal and the preferred format of the desired digital signal is an MPEG-like bitstream.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the MPEG-like bitstream is a MPEG-2 bitstream.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the wide area network is the Internet, and wherein the end user requests the desired audio/visual signal from a content provider via the Internet.

16. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of transmitting the desired digital signal over a wide area network before combining the desired digital signal with the commercial message.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the wide area network is the Internet.

18. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of receiving the commercial message from a sponsor before combining the commercial message with the desired digital signal.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the commercial message is received from the sponsor via the wide area network.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the sponsor communicates the location of the commercial message on the wide area network.

21. A wireless network for transmitting a commercial message with a desired digital signal to an appliance comprising:

a) a gateway having

- i) a connection for receiving the desired digital signal,
- ii) a storage device for storing the commercial message,
- iii) an encoder that combines the commercial message and the desired digital signal into a combined data stream, and
- iv) a wireless transmitter for broadcasting the combined data stream; and

b) a receiving apparatus having

- i) a wireless receiver for receiving the combined data stream,

- ii) a decoder that decodes the combined data stream into the desired digital signal and the commercial message, and
- iii) a presentation logic device that presents the desired digital signal and the commercial message to the appliance in a format appropriate for the appliance.

22. The network of claim 21, wherein all of the gateway components are completely enclosed within a physical container.
23. The network of claim 21, wherein the receiving apparatus is enclosed within the physical confines of the appliance.
24. The network of claim 21, wherein the receiving apparatus is in an adapter container physically connected to the appliance.
25. The network of claim 21, wherein the connection is a wide area network connection.
26. The network of claim 22, wherein the wide area network connection is a broadband Internet connection.
27. The network of claim 26, wherein the storage device is in communication with the connection and further wherein the commercial message is downloaded from the Internet and temporarily stored in the storage device.
28. The network of claim 21, wherein the gateway further comprises a tuner for receiving a television channel, and wherein the television channel is presented to the connection as the desired digital signal.
29. The network of claim 28, wherein the television channel is received by the tuner digitally.
30. The network of claim 28, wherein the television channel is received by the tuner in an analog format and is digitized before being presented to the connection.

31. The network of claim 28, further comprising a wide area network interface capable of presenting data received from the wide area network to the connection as the desired digital signal.
32. The network of claim 28, wherein the appliance is a television set.
33. The network of claim 21, wherein the encoder buries the commercial message in the combined data stream such that the commercial message is not easily detected in the combined data stream.
34. The network of claim 33, wherein the gateway is able to detect whether the desired digital signal received by the connection already contains a preexisting buried commercial message; and further wherein the gateway broadcasts the desired digital signal without alteration when the preexisting buried commercial message is detected.
35. The network of claim 34, wherein the combined data stream is an MPEG-like bitstream.
36. The network of claim 21, wherein the wireless transmitter utilizes a series of broadband channels, with each channel having at least a 20 Mbps bandwidth.
37. The network of claim 36, wherein the gateway and the receiving apparatus have the ability to negotiate with each other for a clear channel.
38. An adapter for receiving a commercial message and a desired digital signal in a combined data stream and presenting the commercial message and desired digital signal to an appliance, the adapter comprising:
- a) a receiver that receives the combined data stream over a wireless network;
 - b) a decoder in communication with the receiver that decodes the combined data stream into the commercial message and the desired digital signal; and

c) a presentation logic component in communication with the decoder, the presentation logic component having a converter to convert the commercial message and the desired digital signal into a format acceptable to the appliance.

39. The adapter of claim 38, wherein the format acceptable to the appliance is a format chosen from the set including: a digital television signal format, an analog television signal format; an digital audio format; an analog stereo audio format; an MPEG-2 bitstream; and a World Wide Web browser format.

40. The adapter of claim 38, wherein the presentation logic presents the commercial message and the desired digital signal to the appliance such that the commercial message and the desired digital signal are perceptible to an end user at the same time.

41. The adapter of claim 38, wherein the presentation logic sequentially presents the commercial message and the desired digital signal to the appliance, such that the desired digital signal is interrupted by the commercial message.

42. The adapter of claim 38, further comprising:

d) a user control component to allow the user to control selection of the desired digital signal by directing the control component to create a control signal; and

e) a transmitter that transmits the control signal over the wireless network.

43. The adapter of claim 38, further comprising a memory cache in communication with the decoder and the presentation logic component, the memory cache being capable of storing either or both of the desired digital signal and the commercial message.

44. The adapter of claim 43, wherein the message or signal in the cache is stored until the presentation logic chooses to present the stored message or signal to the appliance.

45. The adapter of claim 43, wherein the message or signal in the cache is accumulated over time until the entire message or signal has been received by the receiver.

46. The adapter of claim 38, further comprising an appliance enclosure that encloses all the elements of the adapter within the same enclosure as the appliance.